

# Dalmage's Sermon

WASHINGTON, Aug. 25.—A Bible incident not often noticed is here used by Dr. Dalmage to set forth practical and beautiful truth: text, II Corinthians xj, 33, "Through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall."

Sermons on Paul in jail, Paul on Mars hill, Paul in the shipwreck, Paul before the sanhedrin, Paul before Felix, are plentiful, but in my text we have Paul in a basket.

Damascus is a city of white and glistening architecture, sometimes called "the city of the east," sometimes called "a pearl surrounded by emeralds," at one time distinguished for swords of the best material called Damascus blades and upholstery of richest fabric called damask. A horseman of the name of Saul riding toward this city had been thrown from the saddle. The horse had dropped under the rider for many days and, I think, so permanently injured his eyesight that his defect of vision became the thorn in the flesh for Damascus to butch Christians, but after that hard fall from his horse he was a changed man and preached Christ in Damascus till the city was shaken to its foundation.

The mayor gives authority for his arrest, and the popular cry is, "Kill him, kill him!" The city is surrounded by a high wall, and the gates are watched by the police lest the Christian preacher escape. Many of the houses are built on the wall, and their balconies projected clear over and hovered over the gardens outside. It was customary to lower baskets out of these balconies and pull up fruits and flowers from the gardens. To this day visitors at the monastery of Mount Sinai are lifted and let down in baskets. Detectives prowled around from house to house looking for Paul, but his friends hid him now in one place, now in another. He is no coward, as 50 incidents in his life demonstrate, but he feels his work is not done yet and he evades assassination. "Is that preacher here?" the foaming mob shout at one house door. "Is that preacher here?" the police shout at another house door. Sometimes on the street incognito he passes through a crowd of clutched fists, and sometimes he secretes himself on the house top. At last the infuriate populace get on sure track of him. They have positive evidence that he is in the house of one of the Christians, the balcony of whose home reaches over the wall. "Here he is! Here he is!" the vociferation and blasphemy and howling of the pursuers are at the front door. They break in. "Fetch out that preacher and let him hang his head in the city gate. Where is he?"

The emergency was terrible. Providentially there was a good stout basket in the house. Paul's friends fasten a rope to the basket, Paul steps into it. The basket is lifted to the edge of the balcony on the wall, and then while Paul holds the rope with both hands his friends lower away carefully and cautiously, slowly but surely, farther down and farther down, until the basket strikes the earth and the apostle steps out and afout and alone starts on that famous missionary tour the story of which has astonished earth and heaven. Appropriately in Paul's diary of travels: "Through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall."

**Hanging by a Slender Rope.**  
I observe first on what a slender rope great results hang. The ropemakers who twisted that cord fastened to that lowering basket never knew how much would depend upon the strength of it. How if it had been broken and the apostle's life had been dashed out? What would have become of the Christian church? All that magnificent missionary work in Pamphylia, Cappadocia, Galatia, Macedonia, would have been accomplished. All his writings that make up so indispensable and enchanting a part of the New Testament would never have been written. The story of resurrection would never have been so gloriously told as he told it. That example of heroic and triumphant endurance at Philippi, in the Mediterranean Euroclydon, under flagellation and at his beheading would have had kindled the courage of 10,000 martyrs. But that rope holding that basket, how much depended on it! So again and again great results hang by a slender rope.

Did ever ship of many thousands tons crossing the sea have such an important passenger as had once a boat of leaves from taffrail to stern only three or four feet, the vessel made and floating proof by a coat of bitumen and floating on the Nile with the infant lawgiver of the Jews on board? What if some crocodile should crush it? What if some of the cattle wading in for a drink should sink it? Vessels of war sometimes carry 40 guns looking through the portholes, ready to open battle, but the tiny craft on the Nile seems to be armed with all the guns of thunder that bombarded Sinai at the lawgiving. On how fragile a craft sailed how much of historical importance!

The paragon at Epworth, England, is on fire in the night, and the father rushed through the hallway for the rescue of his children. Seven children are out and safe on the ground, but one remains in the consuming building. That one awakes and, finding his bed on fire and the building crumbling, comes to the window, and two peasants make a ladder of their bodies, one peasant standing on the shoulder of the other, and down the human ladder the boy descends—John Wesley. If you would know how much depended on that ladder of peasants, ask the millions of Methodists on both sides of the sea. Ask their mission stations all around the world. Ask their hundreds of thousands already ascended to join their founder, who would have perished but for the living stairs of peasants' shoulders.

**An Oasis of Light.**  
An English ship stopped at Pitcairn Island, and right in the midst of surrounding cannibalism and squalor the passengers discovered a Christian colony of churches and schools and beautiful homes and highest state of civilization. Five 50 years ago no missionary and no Christian influence had landed there. Why this oasis of light amid a desert of heathendom? Sixty years before a ship had met disaster, and one of the sailors, unable to save anything else, went to his trunk and took out a Bible which his mother had placed there and swam ashore, the Bible held in his teeth. The book was read on all sides until the rough and

vicious population were evangelized, and a church was started, and an enlightened commonwealth established, and the world's history has no more brilliant page than that which tells of the transformation of a nation by one book. It did not seem of much importance whether the sailor continued to hold the book in his teeth or let it fall in the breakers, but upon what small circumstance depended what mighty results!

**Practical Inference:** There are no insignificances in life. The minutest thing is part of a magnitude. Infinity is made up of infinitesimals; great things an aggregation of small things. Bethlehem manger pulling on a star in the eastern sky. One book in a despatched sailor's mouth the evangelization of a multitude. One boat of papyrus on the Nile freighted with events for all ages. The fate of Christendom in a basket let down from a window on the wall. What you do, do well. If you make a rope, make it strong and true, for you know not how much may depend on your workmanship. If you fashion a boat, let it be waterproof, for you know not who may sail in it. If you put a Bible in the trunk of your boy as he goes from home, let it be remembered in your prayers, for it may have a mission as far-reaching as the book which the sailor carried in his teeth to the Pitcairn beach. The plainest man's life is an island between two eternities—eternity past rippling against his shoulders, eternity to come touching his brow. The casual, the accidental, that which merely happened so, are parts of a great plan, and the rope that lets the fugitive apostle from the Damascus wall is the cable that holds to its mooring the ship of the church in the storm of the centuries.

Again, notice unrecognized and unrecorded service. Who spurs that rope? Who tied it to the basket? No, not the illustrious preacher as he stepped into it? Who released not a muscle of the arm or dismissed an anxious look from his face until the basket touched the ground and discharged its magnificent cargo? Not one of their names has come to us, but there was no work done that day in Damascus or in all earth compared with the importance of their work. What if they had in their agitation tied a knot that could slip? What if the sound of the mob at the door had led them to say, "Paul must take care of himself, and we will take care of ourselves?" No, not they held the rope and in doing so did more for the Christian church than any thousand of us will ever accomplish. But God knows and has made record of their undertaking. And they know.

**Cause For Exultation.**  
How exultant they must have felt when they read his letters to the Romans, to the Corinthians, to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, to the Philippians, to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, and when they heard how he walked out of prison, with the earthquake unlocking the door for him, and took command of the Alexandrian city ship when the sailors were nearly scared to death and preached a sermon that nearly shook Felix off his judgment seat! I hear the men and women who helped him down through the window and over the wall talking in private over the matter and saying: "How glad I am that we effected that rescue! In coming times others may get the glory of Paul's work, but no one shall rob us of the satisfaction of knowing that we held the rope."

Once for 30 hours we expected every moment to go to the bottom of the ocean. The wreck struck through the skylights and rushed down into the hold of the ship and hissed against the boilers. It was an awful time, but by the blessing of God and the faithfulness of the men in charge we came out of the cyclone, and we arrived at home. Each one before leaving the ship thanked Captain Andrews. I do not think there was a man or woman that went off that ship without thanking Captain Andrews, and when years after I heard of his death I was impelled to write a letter of condolence to his family in Liverpool. Everybody recognized his goodness, the courage, the kindness, of Captain Andrews, but it occurs to me now that we never thanked the engineer. He stood away down in the darkness amid the hissing furnaces, doing his whole duty. Nobody thanked the engineer, but God recognized his heroism and his continuance and his fidelity, and there will be just as high reward for the engineer, who worked out of sight, as for the captain, who stood on the bridge of the ship in the midst of the howling tempest.

There are said to be 150,000 ministers of religion in this country. About 80,000, I warrant, came from early homes which had to struggle for the necessities of life. The sons of rich bankers and merchants generally become bankers and merchants. The most of those who become ministers are the sons of those who had terrific struggle to get their everyday bread. The collegiate and theological education of that son took every luxury from the parental table for eight years. The other children were more scantily apparelled. The son at college every little while got a bundle from home. In it were the socks that mother had knit sitting up late at night, her sight not as good as once it was. And there also were some delicacies from the sister's hand for the voracious appetite of a hungry student. The father swung the heavy cradle through the wheat, the sweat rolling from his chin bedewing every step of the way, and then sitting down under the cherry tree at noon, thinking to himself, "I am fearfully tired, but it will pay if I can once see that boy through college and if I can know that he will be preaching the gospel of I am dead." The younger children want to know why you can't have this and that as others do, and the mother says, "Be patient, my children, until your brother graduates, and then you shall have more luxuries, but we must see that boy through."

**Good Reason For Rejoicing.**  
The years go by, and the son has been ordained and is preaching the glorious gospel, and a great revival comes, and souls by scores and hundreds accept the gospel from the lips of that young preacher, and father and mother, quite old now, are visiting the son at the village parsonage, and at the close of a Sabbath of mighty blessing father and mother retire to their room, the son lighting the way, and asking them if he can do anything to make them more comfortable, saying if they want anything in the night just to knock on the wall. And then, all alone, father and mother talk over the gracious influences of the day and say: "Well, it was worth all we went through to educate that boy. It was a hard pull, but we held on till the work was done. The world may not know it; but, mother, we held the rope, didn't we?" And the response, "Yes, father, we held the rope, and we held it well. Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." "Pshaw!" says the father, "I never felt so much like a rope."

living in my life as now. I want to see what that fellow is going on to do, he has begun so well."

Something occurs to me quite personal. I was the youngest of a large family of children. My parents were neither rich nor poor. Four of the sons wanted a collegiate education, and four obtained it, but not without great struggle. We never heard the old people say once that they were denying themselves to effect this, but I remember now that my parents always looked tired. I don't think they ever got rested until they lay down in the Somerville cemetery. Mother would sit down in the evening and say, "Well, I don't know what makes me feel so tired!" Father would fall immediately to sleep seated by the evening stand, overcome with the day's fatigues. About 35 years ago the one and about 37 years ago the other put down the burdens of life, but they still hold the rope. O men and women, you bring sometimes how you have fought your way in the world, but I think there have been fully acknowledged. Has there not been some influence in your early or present home that the world cannot see? Does there not reach you from among the New England hills, or from western prairie, or from southern plantation, or from English or Scottish or Irish home a cord of influence that has kept you right when you would have gone wrong, and which after you had made a crooked track recalled you? The rope may be as long as 30 years or 600 miles long or 3,000 miles long, but hands that went out of mortal sight long ago still hold the rope. You want a very swift horse, and you need to rovel him with sharpest spurs and to let the reins lie loose upon the neck and to give a shout to the racer if you are going to ride out of reach of your mother's prayers. Why, a ship crossing the Atlantic in six days can't sail away from that. A sailor finds them on the water on the mast as the place and find the ropes to disentangle a rope in the tempest and finds them swinging on the hammock when he turns in. Why not be frank and acknowledge it? The most of us would long ago have been dashed to pieces had not gracious and loving hands steadily and lovingly and mightily held the rope.

**An Unrecorded Service.**  
But there must come a time when we shall find out who these Damascuses were who lowered Paul in the basket and greet them and all those who have rendered to God and the world unrecognized and unrecorded services. That is going to be one of the glad excitements of heaven, the who did great good on earth and got no credit for it. Here the church has been going on 19 centuries, and yet the world has not recognized the services of the people in the Damascus balcony. Charles G. Finney said to a dying Christian, "Give my love to St. Paul when you meet him." When you and I meet him, as we will, I shall ask him to introduce me to those who got him out of the Damascus peril.

We go into long sermons to prove that we will be able to recognize people in heaven when there is one reason we fail to present, and that is better than all—God will introduce us. We shall have them all pointed out. You would not be guilty of the imputation of ingratitude in your part not introduced, and celestial politeness will demand that we be made acquainted with all the heavenly household. What rehearsal of old times and recital of stirring reminiscences! If others fail to give introduction, God will take us through, and before our first 24 hours in heaven—if it were calculated by earthly time—have passed we shall meet and talk with more heavenly celebrities than in our entire mortal state we met in the earthly world. Many who made great noise of usefulness will sit on the last seat by the front door of the heavenly temple, while right up within arm's reach of the heavenly throne will be many who, though they could not preach themselves or do great exploits for God, nevertheless held the rope.

Come, let us go right up and accost those on the circle of heavenly thrones. Surely they must have killed in battle a million men. Surely they must have been buried with all the cathedrals sounding a dirge and all the towers of all cities tolling the national dirge. Who art thou, mighty one of heaven? "I lived by choice the unmarried daughter in an humble home that I might take care of my parents in their old age, and I endured without complaint all their querulousness and administered to all their wants for 20 years." Let us pass on round the circle of thrones. Who art thou, mighty one of heaven? "I was for 35 years a Christian invalid and suffered all the while, occasionally writing a note of sympathy for those worse off than I, and was general confidant of all those who had trouble, and once while I was struggling enough to make a garment for that poor family in the back lane." Pass on to another throne. Who art thou, mighty one of heaven? "I was the mother who raised a whole family of children for God, and they are out in the world Christian merchants, Christian mechanics, Christian wives, and I have had full reward for all my toil." Let us pass on in the circle of thrones. "I had a Sabbath school class, and they were always on my heart, and they all entered the kingdom of God, and I am waiting for their arrival." But who art thou, mighty one of heaven, on this other throne? "In time of bitter persecution I owned a house in Damascus, a house on the wall. A man who preached Christ was hounded from street to street, and I hid him from the assassins, and when I found them breaking into my house and I could no longer keep him safely I advised him to flee for his dear life, and a basket was let down over the wall with the maltreated man in it, and was one who helped hold the rope." And I said, "Is that all?" And he answered, "That is all." And while I was lost in amazement I heard a strong voice that sounded as though it might once have been hoarse from many exposures and triumphant as though it might have belonged to one of the martyrs, and it said, "Not many mighty, but many noble, are called, but God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and the basings of the world and things which are despised hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not to bring to naught things which are, that no flesh should glory in his presence." And I looked to see from whence the voice came, and lo, it was the very one who had said, "Through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall."

**Nothing Is Insignificant.**  
Henceforth, think of nothing as insignificant. A little thing may decide your life. A Cuneader put out from England for New York. It was well equipped, but in putting up a stove in the pilot box a nail was driven too near the compass. You know how that nail

would affect the compass. The ship's officers, deceived by that distracted compass, put the ship 200 miles off her right course and suddenly the man on the lookout cried, "Land ho!" and the ship was lashed within a few yards of her demolition on Nantucket shoals. A shipwrecked man came wrecking a Cuneader. Small ropes hold mighty destinies.

A minister seated in Boston at his table, lacking a word, puts his hand beneath his head and lifts back his chair to think, and the ceiling falls and crushes the table and would have crushed him. A minister in Jamaica at night by the light of an insect called the candle fly is kept from stepping over a precipice a hundred feet. F. W. Robertson, the celebrated English clergyman, said that he entered the ministry from a train of circumstances started by the barking of a dog. Had the wind blown one way on a certain day the Spanish Inquisition would have been established in England, but it blew the other way, and that dropped the accused institution, with 75 tons of shipping, to the bottom of the sea or flung the splintered logs on the rocks.

Nothing unimportant in your life or mine. Three naughts placed on the right side of the figure one make a thousand, and six naughts on the right side of the figure one a million, and our nothingness placed on the right side may be augmentation limitless. All the ages of time and eternity affected by the basket let down from a Damascus balcony.

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## WHEN A PARISIAN BATHES.

The Difficulties He Encounters in Taking a Hot Dip.

When a Parisian takes a bath, all Paris knows it—that is, when he takes a hot bath. The Parisian has a hard time keeping clean. That he succeeds so well is very much to his credit. He labors under the disadvantage of having no adequate supply of water. There is plenty of water in Paris, to be sure, and an enormous quantity of it is used on the streets. All day long men with lines of hose which are made in metal sections with flexible joints, each section mounted on wheels, go up and down the principal streets and boulevards distributing water with a free hand. The difficulty is not to get water on the street level, but to get it above that level, and after that the great difficulty is to get it hot. All but the very newest of modern houses in Paris have water only on the street level. This water is carried to the upper floors of houses in buckets as needed. This is true not alone of private houses, but of hotels of the old type. These abound in Paris, and the comforts they offer to the traveler are almost confined to the bathtub. Moreover, though water may be drawn in any quantity on the ground floor, there are no facilities for heating water. A hotel keeper may put a kettle on the range and send up a quart of hot water to your room, but when it comes to filling a tub he would admit that he is beyond the capacity of his establishment. Many Parisians use the big bathtubs along the Seine. In places these houses occupy a greater part of the river, but if a Parisian wants a hot bath at home he must turn to that time honored French institution, the perambulating bathtub.

To the American who sees this institution for the first time traversing the principal streets of the great city it is very mirth provoking. And he will see it in almost any part of the city if he stays there long enough and moves about the streets, for the bathman's houses are distributed all over Paris. From the bathing establishment the bathman goes forth in harness, the principal streets of the great city it is very mirth provoking. And he will see it in almost any part of the city if he stays there long enough and moves about the streets, for the bathman's houses are distributed all over Paris. From the bathing establishment the bathman goes forth in harness, the principal streets of the great city it is very mirth provoking. And he will see it in almost any part of the city if he stays there long enough and moves about the streets, for the bathman's houses are distributed all over Paris. 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